# RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

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## BAERIA ULIGINOSA
## MARSH GOLD FIELDS

Prepared
by
RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
of the
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Ana Canyon
Orange County
California

BAERIA ULIGINOSA
MARSH GOLD FIELDS

Compositae Sunflower Family

Branching annual 6-12 in. high, forming a rounded mound when growing singly or a low mat when crowded. Root slender, 4-8 in. long and bearing numerous very fine rootlets. Herbage light green, somewhat succulent, hairy (especially when young). Leaves opposite, sessile, strap-shaped (ligulate), $\frac{1}{4}$-$\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, 1-3 in. long, bearing 2-several small spreading (salient) lobes per side, or these sometimes lacking. Flower heads $\frac{1}{2}$ inch high, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad, borne on peduncles 1-3 in. long, little higher than the upper leaves; involucral bracts 11-15, oblong-elliptic, $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long, usually keeled (carinate) on back; receptacle conical, naked. Ray flowers 11-15, the blade oblong-elliptic, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long, mostly 2-3 toothed at apex, slightly lighter yellow at apex than at base; achene (a 1-seeded indehiscent fruit) 1/8 in. long, fertile, hairy, bearing 2-4 awns and several short scales at its apex. Disc flowers 75-100, each about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long (including the fertile achene which is similar to that of the ray flower), corolla with a narrow tube, campanulate throat and 5-lobed limb, the 2 style tips and upper portion of the stamens exserted. Achenes mature rapidly after fertilization, are black, hairy, prismatic, taper slightly to the base, the pappus whitish, persistent.

The genus Baeria (in honor of Baer, Russian zoologist) was proposed in 1836 by Fisch and Mey, Russian scientists. The species of Baeria, numbering 15-20, range from British Columbia to northern Baja California, but most of them are confined to California where they are called GOLD FIELDS because of the extensive areas which some kinds cover with yellow in early spring. Except for one perennial the species are all annuals inhabiting open grasslands, hillsides or low moist swales. Baeria is a member of the Tribe Helenieae of the Sunflower Family and seems to be most closely related to Lasthenia and Monolopia, both of which are found in California. To those who are unfamiliar with the characteristics of the members of the Compositae it should be pointed out that what appears to be a single flower in this group is really a much congested inflorescence which often contains several hundred small flowers. The most outstanding example probably being the giant Russian Sunflower of horticulture in which a single inflorescence (head) may be over a foot across and on which several dozen ray flowers and several thousand disc flowers are aggregated. Botanists believe that the Compositae represent a high-

ly specialized and advanced family of plants of comparatively recent evolutionary development.

Baeria uliginosa was first described as Dichaeta uliginosa in 1841 by Thos. Nuttall, American botanist, who had collected in California in 1835. His specimens of this species were obtained at Santa Barbara. The name uliginosa means marsh dweller and is in reference to the plant's lowland habitat. Asa Gray, famous American botanist, later united Dichaeta with Baeria, a procedure which has been accepted by nearly all recent botanists. Baeria uliginosa ranges from Santa Barbara to a short distance north of San Francisco, where it grows in moist areas in the immediate vicinity of the ocean. In Contra Costa County and in parts of the San Joaquin Valley it is slenderer and more erect and has been named var. tenella.

Our first seeds of Baeria uliginosa were obtained on Point Reyes, Marin Co., in June of 1934. At that locality the plants were comparatively abundant but were so crowded by other plants that they were not conspicuous. However, under cultivation at the Garden they have proven to be a very valuable low annual ground cover. Our main source of cultivated seeds has been from row plantings made in the fall in our wild flower nursery. These plantings generally begin to flower in April and continue for about two months. The seeds are easily harvested by pulling the entire plants. Inside the Garden proper Marsh Gold Fields have been used very effectively as a golden yellow mat between plantings of Iris and other perennials. The plants thrive in heavy soils and can be made to bloom over a long period if given liberal amounts of water. They can be naturalized in areas that are left undisturbed during the dry season and will spring up after the first fall rains. Early removal of weeds is essential for success. This species might well be used as an interesting low yellow border in the average garden where it would mature in time to be replaced by summer and fall blooming plants.

We have been unable to find records of Baeria uliginosa ever having been cultivated prior to its use at this Garden, and as a result seeds are not available from the ordinary commercial seedsmen.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

Of The Native Plants of California.

Established 1927

In Memory of John W. Bixby

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Purpose: A scientific institution devoted to the growth and study of the native plants of California for their botanical, horticultural and popular features.

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MAIL ADDRESS

R. F. D., Anaheim, California

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